



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov



Left: Cory Mullins, a protective services specialist at the Oakland County Baldwin District, steps up to the plate for the Baldwin Crushers Aug. 10 in Waterford. The game pitted a friendly competition between two Oakland County district offices.

Let's play ball!

Late summer competition pits peers for fun, fitness and teamwork

From Lynn Contreras, Community Resource Coordinator

DHS-Oakland County, Bloomfield Hills

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Employees from Oakland County's Children and Family Services District (Baldwin Road) and the Saginaw Street District faced off in a fun summertime game of softball Aug. 10 at Shell Park in Waterford. **Adam Schultz**, adult services specialists at the Saginaw District and one of the lead planners of the game and picnic, said that the two districts have always shared a bond. Both offices are in Pontiac and have shared district managers and staff through the years. The staffs decided to plan a softball game and picnic to celebrate that bond.

Above: Jeffrey Robinson, a family resource specialist at Owen School in Pontiac, prepares for the game as a member of the Pontiac Punishers.

Of course the first order of business was coming up with team names. The Pontiac Punishers and the Baldwin Crushers were born and the rivalry began. Team shirts were designed and ordered for the players and heck – team camaraderie was so strong that staff not playing even ordered shirts! Just for fun, many players added nicknames to their shirts – like Meat Hook and Lil Bambino. It was a perfect evening for a game and picnic. There were nearly 100 folks including players, coworkers, family and friends that came to watch. Everyone cheered their team on through the seven innings. Finally the game ended with a 16-2 win for the Baldwin Crushers. Maybe it's those "on-call shifts" that gave the CFS district players the extra stamina and edge!

Everyone enjoyed a wonderful picnic after the game. **Dorothy Butler**, district manager of the Baldwin District, and **Marilyn Szymanski**, the district secretary, planned the picnic. The evening only ended when the sun set and it became too dark to see.

The game was a great event. It showed the strong bonds the two offices currently share and helped develop new and stronger bonds that evening. Plans are under way for a rematch later in September.

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Left: Mary Ann Rankey of Bay-Arenac DHS (center) with one family that received help through Styles for Students.

Above: a representative view of what each child received in his or her package from Styles for Students.

Bay County DHS & United Way Styles for Students

A way for low-income kids to have something new for school

From Mary Ann Rankey, Community Resource Coordinator

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We all remember as a child, the feeling we had on the first day of school – new shoes, new outfit, new friends. There was nothing like it! Imagine being on public assistance and getting a letter that says your children can get new school clothes and shoes. This is the fourth year that Bay County DHS and Bay County United Way have worked together to present the Styles for Students program for K-12 students.

Each year about 200 Bay County children are chosen through DHS worker referral to participate in the program. Volunteer services contacts the families and mails out the applications. The parent or guardian completes the form, which includes the child's sizes for this fall and their favorite colors, and returns it to DHS by mid-June.

In the meantime United Way gets busy contacting businesses, agencies and churches to see if their employees or members would like to sponsor some families and purchase back-to-school clothing for needy children. Some of the local sponsors are banks, credit unions, churches, accounting firms, realtors, SC Johnson, and General Motors. The Willow Lounge even had a golf outing which raised over \$1,000. Bay County DHS staff, through the Social Committee, sponsored two families this year. We raised the money to support it through casual days and 50-50 drawings.

Sponsors are asked to provide at least one complete outfit of new clothing including a pair of shoes for each child. Many of the sponsors send two or three outfits in each child's package. The clothing packages are delivered to DHS in August. The families are notified and they are able to come to the office to pick them up.

It is very heartwarming to see the look on the faces of the children when they come to DHS to pick up the packages with their parents. They are so appreciative and thankful. We try to let them know which business or agency sponsored their family and we encourage them to consider sending a thank you note. Styles for Students helps to build the self-esteem of children as they return to school. It is a rewarding program for everyone involved.



Above: Salvation Army coordinator Kyle Hudson, Polly Carroll of Monroe DHS, and volunteer Lorraine Katschor bringing supplies to the distribution center (right).

Back to school in Monroe County *DHS, volunteers & Salvation Army help supply the future*

From Polly Carroll, Community
Resource Coordinator
Monroe County DHS, Monroe
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Volunteers from the Monroe County DHS and the Monroe County Salvation Army worked together to provide more than 700 area children with backpacks filled with grade-appropriate school supplies during the 2007 Supplying the Future project. The event was held Aug. 25 at the Arthur Lesow Community Center. The Salvation Army provides many of the backpacks while local businesses, retailers, churches, city workers and other generous individuals donate the supplies.

At 73 years of age, DHS volunteer Mrs. Lorraine Katschor deserves much of the credit. She filled most of these 700 bags as fast as Salvation Army coordinator Kyle Hudson and I collected them. Halfway into the project, Mrs. Katschor received a great amount of assistance from the Salvation Army's mom and daughter team volunteers, Tami and Holly Fletcher.

They were all dynamos. I don't know how we can possibly surpass these 2007 figures but next year volunteers said it was hard work but fun and they'd like to work on the project again.



Date: Aug. 7
To: Julie Horn Alexander, Director
DHS Office of Quality Assurance, Lansing
Subj: Sharon Graff

We have a gem in the office -- Sharon Graff. As an out-state reviewer I have limited contact with Sharon. I sometimes bug her for supplies, a negative replacement or info. when I have a "brain freeze." She has always met me with a "smile" and has always been super efficient. It is a pleasure to work with someone who is so positive and optimistic. I wish we could clone her!

Jim Gross

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■ Jim Gross is a reviewer for the Office of Quality Assurance in Lapeer County. Sharon Graff is a secretary in Lansing.

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Date: Aug. 1
To: Pam Joles, Family Independence Specialist
Roscommon DHS, Roscommon
Subj: Thank you

It is nice to meet a person that takes the time to make the people that you are trying to help feel like they and their issues are significant to you. And that you will do anything you can to help them. There aren't very many people like that left in the world. You made me feel very comfortable and welcome at our appointment today. I thought I should take the time to tell you about it. I am sure you don't hear very many nice things in the thankless job you have. Most people just expect it from you. So, thank you again for your time this morning.

Jennifer Donovan

Prudenville

■ Ogemaw-Roscommon DHS director **Walt Kaniszewski** submitted this letter with assistance from **Margaret Beauregard**, Pam Joles' family independence manager.

Oct. 11 is National Depression Screening Day

A chance for employees to check personal mental health cost-free and in privacy

From Employee Service Program

Office of State Employer

<http://www.michigan.gov/esp>

National Depression Screening Day is Thursday, Oct. 11, a day to call attention to the illness of depression on a national level, educate the public about its symptoms and effective treatments, offer individuals the opportunity to be screened for depression, and connect those in need of treatment to the mental health care system. Like screenings for other illnesses, depression screenings are a valuable part of preventive healthcare. People suffering from depression often experience some of these key symptoms:

- A persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood.
- Sleeping too little, early morning awakening, or sleeping too much.
- Reduced appetite and weight loss or increased appetite and weight gain.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed.
- Restlessness or irritability.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Fatigue or loss of energy.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

You can complete a screening online by going to the Employee Service Program Web site www.michigan.gov/esp and follow the links to the Interactive Screening Program. You may also complete a telephone assessment for either alcohol or depression by calling **1-800-887-5676** and using your touch-tone keypad to respond to the pre-recorded questions. Screenings are not a professional diagnosis. Screenings point out the presence or absence of depressive symptoms and provide referral information for further evaluation if needed. You may also contact the Employee Service Program by calling 1-517-373-7630 or 1-800-521-1377 if you would like to schedule a confidential appointment with one of our professional counselors.

■ **Almost 9,000 state of Michigan employees and their adult family members have completed a screening for depression since 2000. A large number of those who have completed the screening have then gone on to receive treatment services.**

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
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